

B R O B D I N G N A G

Brobdingnag #73

Letter Issue

28 October 1967

There is an excessive back-log in the letter department and I thought we would have an issue devoted to little else. First, however, there is one item which was left over from last issue.

Rating n-way Draws (where n is an integer greater than two)

There is a problem about rating 3-way, and similar, drawn games, the so-called stalemated games. At least there is in the BROB Rating system. In this system all the survivors are, in the case of an ordinary win, ranked in order of the pieces that they have remaining on the board at the end of the game. The winner gets 6 points, the next strongest survivor 4 points, the next 2 points and so on. If we apply the same system in the case of a drawn game, with several survivors, we would award a player who was unable to secure a win precisely as many points as if he had won the game. Which seems to me to be a slight to those who actually do win games.

A solution, of course, would be to not rate such games at all - to regard any game like the three way draw reported last issue as a mismatch, and not count it at all. In many ways this is an attractive solution. However, we should note that there is in many ways very little difference between a three or four-way draw and a two-way draw. If the victory criterion were 20 or 21 supply centres, as some people would prefer, there would be no difference at all between a two-way draw and a multi-player draw. It is only an accident that the wording of the rulebook is such that a two-way draw results in necessary equality; equality is, of course, unusual in other cases. So if we refused to rate games that went to a multi-player draw we should, logically, drop two way draw games as well. And several of them have been accepted in all the Rating Lists and it would be awkward to drop them at this late date.

The solution I have adopted, not a good one but the best I can see, is to rate all the survivors in such a game equally. The game described in the last issue went, effectively, to a 16-9-9 supply centre position, at least it would have if the Gamesmaster had allowed it to run on for another year. Since all three of these players outlasted the ~~four~~ eliminated players they have each won four sub-games and I gave them each four points. No difference was made between the player who had 16 forces at end of play, and the other two who each had 9. Eliminated players, of course, were rated in the usual way. They each lost to the three survivors, so they each get -3 from that cause; their remaining points are distributed according to how well they did among themselves.

The ADAG game mentioned last issue, 1966 O, appears to be only the first among several in which either a win or a two way draw will be impossible. I propose rating all of them as outlined above.

Sealed Bag

Eugene Prosnitz, 200 Clinton St., Brooklyn, NY, 11201:

My general feeling about variants is that when there are several players, each playing one country, the game should be counted for personal rating lists, but not for country rating lists, as the variances radically affect the balance of power. Even the simple change of permitting players to select their original pieces and have a building season in 1900 changes the balance as follows:

France and Italy are probably weaker (especially France) since they may build additional Mediterranean fleets and fight each other. Austria is strengthened, since it may build a third army and go after Rumania instead of Greece, also since an Italian attack is less likely. Germany is strengthened by the increased possibility of an Italo-French war, also since Russia may build differently in St. Petersburg and go after Norway instead of Sweden.

England, Russia, and Turkey are probably about the same strength. England loses by the St. Petersburg situation, but gains because France may build an army in Brest, also because England may build three fleets and mobilize more quickly. Russia and Turkey lose by the increased chances of an Austro-Italian alliance, but gain because they can build armies on the Black Sea coast and neutralize it.

Incidentally, I wonder if having a building season in winter, 1900, wouldn't improve the game, as a regular thing. It would make the game more balanced in helping Austria and Germany; and would also add many more varied and interesting patterns to the opening years of play, and give the players a much wider choice of decisions at the beginning of play.

((+ (As you know from my reply some time ago, my view of the 1900 build is that it weakens England slightly, and Austria a lot. Italy is certainly strengthened. Germany is also strengthened, not so much militarily as diplomatically. And Russia is, of course, strengthened. This variant was tried at least once, as long ago as the summer of 1964, by the Youngstown University Diplomacy Club. The outcome was a draw for Germany and Italy. I don't know that that tells us much about the variant as such, though, as those countries were played by Smythe and Moning, and I have the impression that they regularly won all the games at the YUDC. Your point that this variant would add variety to the usually hackneyed opening move is certainly correct. jamcc +))

Charles Wells, 3678 Lindholm Road, Cleveland, Ohio, 44120: What do you think of the neutral player idea that has been proposed by Rod Walker? The idea is that a neutral player would make moves missed by a player, acting on sealed instructions given to the Gamesmaster ahead of time by that player (and changeable at any time by the player). Such instructions would be of the fight country A, but not country B unless attacked, etc., sort. The player could choose not to give sealed instructions and could choose to allow his units to stand if he missed a move, if he wished. Walker has not put such a system in operation; now he is using a neutral player

only on request for a specific move if the player knows ahead of time that he won't get his move in. But his more elaborate idea has certain attractions. The neutral player's identity, of course, is kept secret.

((+Frankly, I don't know what all this accomplishes. In the case of a player who knows that he is going to be away, say on an extended vacation, nearly all magazines now allow him to appoint a temporary replacement. He naturally instructs that player as to his major plan of campaign, which other players he may attack, which not, and so on. But this is not where missing moves occur. They occur because players neglect to send in their moves or, sometimes, because of an error on the part of the Post Office and late delivery. To make the proposed scheme work a player would have to send the gamesmaster a constant stream of revisions of his secret orders, reflecting his feeling as influenced by the ebb and flow of battle. If he can't send in a simple set of move orders, how do you expect him to keep his secret orders revised? The cure is worse than the disease.

Of course, there is the odd occasion where a player is going to be away briefly, and is not certain whether or not he will be back to attend to the following set of moves. As far as BROB is concerned he can now send in with his Spring moves a tentative set for Fall in case he is not back to look after the Fall moves, and similarly with any other season of play. Such tentative moves can be as elaborate as he pleases. He could, if he wanted to, consider every possible outcome of the current move and give a conditional move to be used in reply. What purpose do these sealed orders really serve?

There are exceptions, as always. But the overwhelming majority of missed moves have been as a result of a player losing interest, momentarily or otherwise, and neglecting to play. No gimmick is really going to help such a disinterested player, and I see no reason why any gamesmaster should go out of his way to help him when he refuses to help himself. -jamcc)+))

Douglas Beyerlein, 3934 S. W. Southern, Seattle, Wash., 98116:

The charts on pages 14 and 15 of BROB #68 are very interesting. However, I really can't draw any real conclusion from them because there are factors influencing the figures that are not shown in your charts, such as whether or not the zine will run an unlimited number of games (that is, if it always has game openings), if the zine has a good reputation or not, the quality of the gamesmastering, etc. Now I agree that the charts (especially the one on page 14) show somewhat the quality of the zines, but not to a beginner who has really no notion of what's a top rate zine and what's not. For example, looking at the chart on page 14 shows that Brobdingnag, Euralia, E. E., and Jutland Jollies have the fewest players... and to a beginner this could easily imply that these zines are the most undesirable around, which is grossly false in some cases. At once you must evaluate the charts. Could you clear up the situation a bit?

((+We should be clear what the charts mentioned are trying to do. They are not trying to evaluate the quality of the zines, nor even to estimate their popularity. Larry Peery made the statement that he thought that there were certain cliques within the Diplomacy world, each of which had their own few zines, and that there was little

crossing over of players between the various groups. The charts were prepared in an attempt to find out how true, or otherwise, Larry's belief was. The impression I get from looking at them is that his feeling is not substantiated. The results look very close to a random scatter.

If you wanted to find out which zines were the most popular you would have to conduct a poll of some sort. In that issue I named eight people (Francis, Nelson, Smythe, Tzudiker, Brannan, Reinsel, Turner, and Gemignani) who are in games in 7 or more magazines. Poll them, or some wider group all of whose members are familiar with most of the zines. Ask them which magazines they prefer, and you will get some sort of an answer to that question. But it is not a question which can be answered by looking at the tables you refer to.

Why don't you do this in Efgiart? I don't know if anyone else gives a damn or not, but you would be sure of attracting the attention of all the gamesmasters if you ran such a poll. You would have to preserve secrecy of individual answers, of course, but I don't see why you couldn't publish totals, if you are interested in this question. --jamcc+))

John Koning, 2008 Sherman Ave., Apt. 1, Evanston, Ill., 60201:

The charts in #68 are most interesting. There is far greater overlapping among zines than I had imagined.

The suggested variant, similar to Kriegspiel, sounds interesting. It wouldn't be much fun for spectators, however, until the game was over.

I cannot stencil stab in bits because of the format I use. stab begins with announcements, then goes through each section on a continuous basis. To stencil any of it ahead of time I would have to resort to continuations of long games, press releases, etc., on pages further on in the issue. I prefer doing it this way.

Draws seem to be "in the wind" of late, and I suppose eventually there will have to be some agreement on what to do in such cases. I don't completely agree with Boardman's suggestion ((Grau 140)), however, since I think a win is possible in one of the games to which he refers.

((+I am surprised how much comment there has been on those overlap of player charts. Nearly everyone writing me has commented. Now if they had demonstrated that all Graustark players were also Big Brother players, or something of the sort, I would have understood the interest. But the net result was essentially a negative one, and the response was unlooked for.

Perhaps I had better explain the proposed variant. It is, as you say, the equivalent for Diplomacy to Kriegspiel for Chess. The board is set up in the usual way and the players for the countries announced. After that, though, the whole thing goes underground. Players send in their moves to the gamesmaster, who writes 7 individual letters in reply, telling each of the players which of his moves succeeded and which failed but not telling him anything about the moves of the other players. In general this corresponds to actual war. A belligerent knows about the coasty forces with which he is in contact, but usually has little information about where the enemy reserves are. All of that sort of thing is hidden beyond what the Duke of Wellington called "the other side of the hill". Retreats would be useful because, on being informed that such and such places were open for retreat, the

player would learn something about the location of hostile forces. It might sometimes be worth while to actually court defeat and consequent retreat, in order to gain such information. The equivalent of a reconnaissance raid in real war.

Perhaps a power badly reduced in strength might sometimes have information of use to other powers and be able to talk his way into getting support from one or other of them in return for it. As you say, though, the game has the bad feature that there is little for the gamesmaster to publish, though there could still be press releases, and there would be nothing to interest the spectator until the game was over.

Your system of producing sTab undoubtedly leads to a much more readable product than those zines, like this one, which are produced in bits and pieces. On the other hand it must require a murderous schedule for the publisher.

Yes, multi-player draws are very much in the air these days. It will be interesting to see what sort of procedure sTab will adopt. -jamcc+))

Eugene Prosnitz, (address above): On rating systems, I think your statement ((EROB #66)) that, according to my proposed rating system, six other players would be ahead of Smythe, is not valid, since these six players have only played one completed game, not enough to rate them.

Concerning variants: It seems to me that games like Hyper-space and MicroDiplomacy, which use the same board and 7 players with 34 supply centers can be rated, as to players, in the same manner as the regular games. However, five man games throw off the center year averages, give the players an increased chance of winning, etc.,

On the other hand, certain seven man games, such as Miller's game of anonymity, which has no negotiating except through propaganda, probably should not be counted, since the factor of diplomatic skill is so different. Also, I wouldn't count Miller's game of chaos, which is largely luck. So maybe it's easiest to draw a firm line and leave all variants out.

I disagree with your analysis of Austria's and England's position, after 1900 builds. To me, the swing country in the game is Italy, i.e. the question, does Italy go east or west is the most important single factor influencing the early part of the game. Therefore, if Italy is likely to build a fleet Rome and France may build a fleet in Marseilles, increasing the likelihood of an Italo-French war, Austria benefits tremendously.

Secondly, Turkey can now build two or three fleets, and use them against Russia or Italy, instead of moving armies against Austria.

Thirdly, Austria has no real need of a fleet the first year, since it seldom goes to the Adriatic. An army is much more flexible, as can be demonstrated in Don Miller's current hyperspace game.

True, giving Russia an option to build an army in Sevastopol would hurt Austria, but I think the other three factors I mentioned

outweigh this. Besides, I've found the Russo-Turkish alliance against Austria to be probably the most common alliance of any on the board. It is one of the most mutually beneficial (as contrasted with the West, where I have a circular theory of optimum strategy, i.e. Germany's best bet is to attack France, France's best bet is to attack England, and England's best bet is to attack Germany or Russia.)

As for England, no need to shed any tears with winter, 1900, builds. In order for Russia to take and hold Norway, it must move two pieces north in spring, 1901, and then guess in the Fall, whether England is going to attack Norway or move to the Barents Sea. So Russia might be better off going for Sweden. (Remember, England may have three fleets in 1901). Besides England may be helped by the fact that France can now build an army in Brest, and Germany can build an army in Kiel.

((+ (Perhaps I had better explain for the benefit of the assembled multitude, that this is your reply, to my reply, to an earlier letter, the relevant portion of which is published on page 2 of this issue.

I still feel that Austria is weaker in the variant game than in the regular game. It is true that she doesn't need a fleet in 1901, and is tactically stronger with an army then instead. However, if Austria is to eventually fight either Italy or Turkey, and it will be a masterpiece of diplomatic skill on her part to avoid war with at least one of them, she will eventually need fleets. And what guarantee has she of ever being able to build a fleet, after 1900, when her only naval base is under Italian guns? To be certain of having at least one fleet, an absolute necessity to her eventually, though not in 1901, she must build it in 1900. This means that it is the only power on the board given no additional option in the variant which it did not already possess in the standard game. It is, therefore, relatively weaker in the variant.

Germany certainly gains by the variant, and it is a country which very much needs a gain, as shown by the last rating list. To that extent, at least, it makes a better game. Anyway, don't let me say anything against this variant - I proposed the thing myself in Graustark back in '64. I'd like to hear Smythe's or Loning's opinion of what they thought of it when they tried it out then. -jamco+))

Dave Lebling, Box 2234, Burton House, 420 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, Mass., 02139.: Something that crossed my mind about the rosters is this: The ideal way to keep the rosters up to date, with any corrections, correlations, etc., needed, would be to use a computer. All that would be necessary would be the program which would take the information

1984X: John Machievelli, G, (out F07)

and be able to apply it to any rating system, John's personal records, the records for Germany, ad infinitum. Heck, after only four weeks of 6.47 (a computer course here) ("here" is M.I.T.) I could make a stab at it. Anyway, that would be the ideal method. High Liver was computer printed. Maybe Richard Shagrin would be up to this?

Incidentally, there is a "Strategic Game Society" here which

plays an interesting Diplomacy variant: "Diplomacy Hill". It's an Avalon-Hill type Diplomacy which takes hours and hours to play, but is several times more realistic than Diplomacy. The only drawbacks are, of course, the chance involved and the alternation of turns. One full turn takes an hour and a half at least. The neutrals had not all been over run when I left at 8:00 (the thing had started at 1:00). Russia had been jumped by Germany, Austria and Turkey, while Turkey had been jumped by Italy, and Germany by England. It's a very interesting game though, and perhaps I can get a set of rules to publish in Glock, although I am told there are no rules in written form.

((+ (Yes, Shagrin could do the computer programming you want. For that matter Earl Thompson is a programmer by profession, Ron Bouds has done a lot. Terry Muck, I understand, is in the upper reaches of the profession, where he tells the programmers what to do. For that matter I occasionally use a computer myself and I am sure there are dozens of others who do likewise. I wonder if it is worth it though. There are considerably fewer than 200 active postal Diplomacy players in the world; using a computer to tabulate them seems like using an awfully big sledge hammer on a very little nut. Of course, they will doubtless want you to prepare some sort of program as the final test on the course you are on. Why not do it yourself? -jamco+))

Larry Peery, 5834 Estelle St., San Diego, Calif., 92115.: My reaction to the massive list of "games in progress" ((PROB #70)) was "Horrors!" To think that there are that many people with nothing better to do than play Diplomacy makes me wonder about the future of the world. Sigh....

I have watched with great interest the various comments on who makes the best diplomats. I said nothing earlier because I automatically assumed that someone actually in that field, or one closely related to it, would jump to comment; but after thinking about it, I was amazed to discover that I couldn't think of anyone except myself who is primarily interested in the field of "diplomacy". I am of course a political science major with emphasis in international relations, and my college education has centered around the study of contemporary diplomacy. I also have a strong background in military affairs and will upon graduation enter the USAF as an officer. The only other person I know in Diplomacy circles who has these same dual qualifications is Rod Walker, editor of Brehwon. I don't recall Rod making any comment so perhaps I can, or should.

Unlike some people I have, for the most part, great respect for the so-called "professional diplomats" of the US Foreign Service. About sixty-five percent of all US ambassadors now come from this branch of the State Department. No longer, except for a few prestige appointments, are we saddled with political appointees. The quality of US diplomats overseas has risen a great deal since 1961. This can be especially seen in looking at the record of our ambassadors in the newest African and Asian states. For the most part these men have done an outstanding job. It is interesting to contrast our ambassadors overseas with those of such countries as the Soviet Union. Eighty-six percent of the USSR's ambassadors are currently listed as being agents of the various Soviet security organizations. In fact you may recall that

shortly after the Penkovsky scandal the entire Soviet Diplomatic Corps was recalled to Moscow because of the exposure of their various backgrounds as spies, under-cover agents, etc.

Another group which I feel have traditionally made good diplomats are the members of the Roman Catholic clergy. Historically such figures as Richelieu, Talleyrand were diplomats par excellence. Undoubtedly much of this was due to the fact that during that period of history the Church offered the only real opportunity for advancement. Still, more recently, cases involving relations between the Vatican and Nazi Germany, the Vatican and Eastern Europe, etc. have shown that there are still many able diplomats in the service of Rome. A history of modern Vatican diplomacy would offer many lessons to the nations.

But the group I wish to most enthusiastically endorse for the role of diplomats is the average citizen. You cannot really train a diplomat, nor are they born. They are the product of a culture, a society. A comparison of diplomats would show that they are indeed true reflections of their societies. Recalling the recent UN debates on Israel, was not Eban a true modern Israeli, was not el Momy the reflection of Nasser's Egypt, and wasn't Canadon the typical Britisher. Yet none of these men are really diplomats by training. Most are political figures moving into a different field because essentially the world of international diplomacy is far different from politics, even international politics. Some of the best ambassadors are drawn as I mentioned from the ranks of the society. The common man serving in the Peace Corps, or overseas in the military, or in some other fashion is representing his country on a people-to-people basis, not a government-to-government basis. The United States government is decidedly unpopular abroad, yet the American people are among the most popular of all. Undoubtedly most of our friends are friends because of the common American's efforts and not those of our government. Too many people feel that it is only the "diplomats" that represent their country and they forget that they, whenever they are observed by foreigners, are also representing their country. I noticed this at EXPO particularly, and have observed it in travels to other countries. The kindness, or rudeness, of one lonely American travelling through a foreign country to some single foreigner can make for all time, in a fashion that no government-to-government program can, an impression of America.

((+It is undoubtedly true that every citizen travelling abroad, and every citizen at home who comes into contact with foreigners, makes an impression, an impression which is often transferred to the country to which he belongs. We are all, whether we like it or not, ambassadors of our respective countries. In a sense this is precisely why Nicolson distrusts amateurs as diplomats. You will remember that this whole discussion started, some months ago, as a result of my quoting a passage from his little book, "Diplomacy".

Elsewhere in the book he considers the following example. A man takes his family abroad, their only foreign vacation. The hotel porter somewhere in Yugoslavia gives his young son a present of a few

postage stamps; the traveller decides there and then that the Serbs (or the Croats, I have forgotten) are the kindest people on earth. On his way home, passing through Paris, his wife, who is driving, is snarled at by a traffic policeman who has had a bad day; promptly France goes to the top of his list of "least favored nations". The professional diplomat is less swayed by such incidents. He has met unexpected kindnesses before, in many countries, as well as irate policemen. While appreciating the one, and disliking the other, just like the rest of us, he will not be so apt to allow such trivial accidents to become the basis of his judgment of a nation. Such, at least, was Nicolson's opinion. -jamcc+))

William Lee Linden, 83-33 Austin St., Kew Gardens, NY, 11415:

It has occurred to me that the Russian Civil War would lend itself to a variant game.

So "the reader who sends in the most complete list of errors occurring in this issue will be given a dollar's extension to his subscription", eh? Well, remember, you asked for it. ((Then follows a list of 34 typos)). Do I get an extension?

((+You do indeed win the fur-lined household utensil. As no one else submitted an entry, I don't even have to check to verify your corrections. Your sub. is hereby extended by 10 issues.

Not only would the Russian Civil War make a Diplomacy variant, but some relatively minor parts of it would do. Many years ago I read Walter Duranty's "I Write as I Please", the reminiscences of a reporter who had covered part of the Civil War. A major section of it was devoted to the Baltic phase of that war and, when I was introduced to Diplomacy, many years after reading the book, I thought to myself, "Here we are back on the Baltic front." In that sector the Whites and the Reds were battling each other as else where. Also, the Baltic states, Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, were attempting to establish their independence. As they all knew that what they managed to get in that period of flux would likely become permanent in the eventual peace, none of the three trusted the others. The Poles were fighting their own war of independence at the same time but were, of course, much larger than any of the Baltic states, so that they all distrusted the Poles. There was an Allied control Commission in the area, trying to establish boundary lines and build up unified force against the Communists. The Commission was composed of French, British, and American parts, no one of which trusted the other two. And within each of these parts the civil and the military elements often pursued opposite policies. There was also moving about in the area a German army under Von der Goltz. All parties, Ests, Letts, Litts, Poles, Russians of all political stripes, and Allied Control Commission, were officially opposed to the continued existence of that army. However, as it was the only reliable military force in the area, all parties were soon bargaining for its support. All of this took place in the part of our map labelled Livonia with insignificant border strips of St. Pete, Warsaw, and Prussia. Rod Walker or somebody like that should be able to make a wonderful variant out of it. -jamcc+))

Larry Peery, 5834 Estelle St., San Diego, Calif., 92115.: One of the most fascinating questions in Diplomacy I think is that of player ratings. This is a topic that intrigues some of us and drives others nuts. I have made no secret of my own feelings that none of the systems now in use, or of those that have been proposed, has been adequate in really properly evaluating a player's performance and ability.

After a good deal of serious thought I have finally come up with what, I think, is a fairly reliable means of rating a person in both his actual playing ability and in other essential areas which another person must be aware of to totally evaluate him as a player, ally, opponent, etc.

Basically I am assigning a five point scale (5-outstanding, 4-superior, 3-good, 2 fair, 1-poor) to each of nine areas (offensive tactical ability, defensive tactical ability, over-all tactical ability, strategic ability, communicability, reliability, integrity, value as an ally, strength as an opponent). From these I will derive an over-all composite score which will be a final rating of the player. More details on this in Xenogogic.

That is the system. The next important question is, who does the evaluating. If at all possible I hope to get at least five different evaluations for each player, which should be sufficient for a fair evaluation. These five will be players in games he is in, or has been in...all in all, I hope to distribute about 130 forms, hoping to get at least 100 back to insure a valid sample.

Obviously, no one will know who is evaluating him, and all replies will be kept in strictest confidence. Only averages of the five evaluations will be released and no individual figures. There will be no mutual evaluation. If X evaluates Y, Y won't evaluate X.

((+Well, best of luck, but if you hope to get a 77% response your are being very optimistic, in my opinion. Jim Mackenzie proposed a system very similar to this back in '65. It had fewer categories, but the principle was the same. I thought then, and think now, that what this will produce will be an estimate of how well the various players are liked by other players, but not of their ability. What is, it is a popularity contest, not a rating list. For a rating list you need to know what a player has actually done; not what other players feel he might do. Which is not to say that the present rating lists are very good: they aren't, and there are some grave injustices in them. Nevertheless, they are a measure, though very imperfect, of the undoctored incidents which have actually occurred; they are not merely a pooled average of the hopes and fears of the average player. -jamcc+))

Douglas Beyerlein, address above.: I agree with you on your ruling for a "stalemate" in a Postal game (EROB 71). The three year rule does not give a player enough time in some cases. To use another example from a Seattle local game I can demonstrate this. The situation was as follows: 1908, with Germany (Stewart) and France (Kueston) allied against Turkey (Hong) and Russia (myself). England was occupied by Germany, Italy by France, and Austria by Turkey. The whole board was in stalemate except in the Mediterranean where French and Turkish

fleets were fighting for the Ionian and Adriatic Seas and the province of Trieste. France could break open the Turkish position by taking Trieste, but to do this he had to have the Adriatic Sea. Long, playing Turkey, outguessed Maeston's France for six "years" and held the Adriatic, but time was on France's side and finally Long guessed wrong: Maeston had the Adriatic, and then Trieste, and finally the Turkish Empire was crumbling fast. With Boardman's ruling the game would have been declared a draw in 1911 without giving France the time needed to guess right. However, in the game Germany and France grew, but then the game opened up with the Germans double-crossing the French and eventually winning on 1919. ...I think your solution of the problem is the best to be offered so far.

((+(A very interesting example and one which demonstrates that a hard and fast rule of three years will not do. Many thanks for telling us-- of this case. -jamcc)+))

((+(In addition to Doug Beyerlein, editor of Effigart and co-editor of Cerebral Nebula, who, above, writes on the multi-player draw, there were brief notes from Charles Heinsel, editor of Big Brother, and Cliff Ollila, editor of International Enquirer, on the same topic. They both indicate that they are in general agreement with the stand taken by BROB in #71, but they do not state what rule they will follow in their own magazines. -jamcc)+))

Eugene Prosnitz, address above.: I found your ratings interesting. Could you explain to me how your rating system works? Is it based on some formula taking into account total supply centers at the end of the game, or supply centers won and lost each year? With presumably a bonus for a win or tie? I'm puzzled; for example, John Beshara is in one game definitely in your Current Game Rating, ADAG AI, with 14 supply centers, and one possibly there, Xenogonic X-1, with 8 supply centers. Yet he only has a rating of plus 1. (Beshara told me that he also has never lost a supply center or had a removal or annihilation, in six games).

Regarding your mention of Peter Sepulveda (BROB 71). He's a very good player, one of the best around. Perhaps I'm influenced by the fact that in one game I played with the Marshall Chess Club crowd, they wiped me out, as Austria, and Peter had a large hand in it.

Do you share my impression that the better players are less honest than the weaker players? There seems to be some sort of perverted moral here. The two most untrustworthy players I've ever run into, in either postal or over the board play, are two of the best. However, I'm continually amazed as to how they keep getting allies.

((+(Several other relatively recent subscribers have asked about the system used in the BROB Rating List and I think it may be worth while to reply here, rather than to each individually. The system arose out of a remark of Charles Wells, that a game of Diplomacy corresponds with a whole Chess tournament, rather than with a single game of chess. That is, every game is regarded as being made up of a number of matches, there being a match between each pair of players in the

game. For instance in a five man game, there are ten of these matches, E-F, E-G, E-I, E-A, F-G, F-I, F-A, G-I, G-A, I-A. Similarly, in a seven man game there are 21 matches. In each of these sub-matches the player who does better gets +1 point, the player who does worse gets -1, and all of the sub-scores added up give the score for the game as a whole. The player who survives the longer is, of course, regarded as having done the better; if both players survive until the end, the one with the more supply centres is regarded as the better.

If there is complete separation, that is if there is no case of two or more players being eliminated simultaneously, or no two having the same number of supply centres at the end, then the score becomes:

+6 for winner who has defeated 6 other players

+4 for second survivor, who has been beaten by the winner, but who has beaten 5 others.

+2 for third survivor, or last eliminated, as case may be

0 for fourth player

-2 for fifth player

-4 for sixth player

-6 for last player, i.e. the first eliminated.

Usually, however, there are a few places in the list where there are ties and the above simple scheme is modified in consequence. A player's total score is just the sum of his score in all his completed games. The country total score is made up in the same way. The percentage country score, however, is an average. The total is transferred to a scale on which a country which was always the first eliminated would get zero, and a country that always won would get 100%. As you can see by the Rating list elsewhere in this issue, Germany now has a score near 35%, England and Turkey are both near 60% and the others waver around the break-even point, or 50%. The individual scores could be put on an average percentage basis in the same way, and there is something to be said for it. However, I did it on one issue of the Rating List, and never again.

So much for the completed game rating list. The Current Rating List is made up in exactly the same way, as far as the game has progressed. If a player is eliminated he loses a point to each of the surviving players in the game and they correspondingly gain a point from him. If he is the first to be eliminated, it means that he gets a score of -6. He is awarded that immediately. Note that in the case of such an early elimination that that is precisely the score he will be awarded anyhow, a year from now on completion of the game, in the Completed Game Listing. So that as far as those eliminated are concerned, the Current Game Rating List is an accurate prediction of the score that they will eventually get. It appears at the time of the elimination, instead of waiting for the end of the game, that is the only difference.

This is not quite true in the case of a surviving player, however. Consider a game in which there are 4 survivors, one with 16 forces, and the other three each with six. Each of these would in the Current Game Rating List get +3 points, representing their "wins" over the three eliminated countries. No attempt is made, while the game is in progress, to rate these survivors among themselves. Nor should there be, in my opinion. Who knows, the three with 6 each may be allied against the one with 16 and the latter may have, in consequence, less chance than any other survivor.

If you look at the Rating List given elsewhere in this issue you will see that John Honing has a score of +14 on the Completed Game List and a score of +20. This means that he has a score of +6 at present in games in progress. That in turn means that he has, so far, beaten six more people than have beaten him, in those games. Looked at another way, if he does averagely well in his current games, out doing as many people as out do him, then next year when all these games are finally counted he will be rated at 20 points. If he does better than that and wins all of the remaining games he will, of course, get more. If he is now at the high water mark and is eliminated from these games immediately, he will get less. But the average worth of his current games to him is now +6, that is the point that his eventual score will fluctuate about, not zero. If you want to phrase it that way you can say that the difference between a player's Current Game Rating and his Completed Game Rating, is his equity in his games in progress.

You mentioned John Beshara. His present (meaning the last time I made up the cards, about Oct. 20) Current Game Rating List is +3. +2 for game 1966AI, meaning that two players have been eliminated in that game and that he has survived; and +1 for 1967U, meaning that he has so far outlasted one player in that game. No many actual supply centres he may have does not enter in to it at all, until it comes to ranking the survivors at the end of the game. And even there there is a complication as you can see by reading the article on page one of this issue. jamcc+))

Monte Zelazny, P. O. Box 11062, Melbourne, Florida, wrote a very interesting letter on his plans for deadlines in his recently announced game. I will not print it here: 1. Those plans are not yet finalized, and 2. He uses a number of games in progress to illustrate his points. No doubt he will publish his views himself; they are well worth reading.

NEW BLOOD

Sid Cochran mentions that

Norman Smith, 242 Van Holan, Houston, Texas, 77022, is interested in the game.

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A recent issue of WROB, sent to James Goldman, was returned, marked "Moved; no forwarding address". If any reader knows of Jim's present whereabouts I would be glad to get the information.

Game 1966R

Game 1966R has just ended in Graustark, adding one more to the growing list of games with multi-player draws. In 1915, Don Berman's France, with 16 supply centres, Chris Wagner's Turkey, with the same number, and Kenneth Levinson's Russia with two, found that they could make no further headway and asked to have the game declared a draw. The game was a remarkable one, in its early stages, as there was no elimination at all until 1908. However, John Boardman has promised a full summary in an early Graustark, so there is no point in going into details here.

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PROBINGMAC Completd Game Rating List - #12.

With the ending of game 1966R a revision of the Rating List is called for. It includes completed games 1963A, B, 1964A, B, D, 1965A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, L, O, M, S, T, 1966B, E, O, AP. The three five-man games, 1963A, 1965O, and 1966AP, are omitted from the country listing. As returns of games started in 1966 begin to come in, it is worth observing that no fewer than nine games from 1965 still remain on the books. Three of them appear on the verge of completion, but the others are uncertain quantities.

+24	John Smythe (W)	+ 2	Dave Lebling
			Mal Naus
+20	Derek Nelson (W)		Mark Owings
			Gail Schow
+14	John Moning		James Sanders
			Conrad von Metzke (W)
+12	Charles Wells (W)	+ 1	Bill Christian
	Jerry Pournelle (W)		Jim Latimer (W)
+ 9	Banks Lebane		Earl Thompson
		0	Edwin Baker
+ 8	John McCallum (W)		Bill Rogert
	Don Miller (W)		Christina Brennan
	Charles Turner (W)		John Davey
+ 7	Frank Clark		Ben Hendin
			Alan Huff (W)
+ 6	Bruce Pelz (W)		Geo. Parks
	Jock Root		
+ 5	Rick Brooks	- 1	Anders Swenson
	Ken Davidson		Robert Ward
		- 2	Bob Adams
+ 4	Don Berman		Brenda Banks
	Richard Bryant		Stephen Barr
	Bob Lake		John Boardman
	Kenneth Levinson		James Dygert
	James MacKenzie (W)		Al Goggins
	Larry Peery		Gregory Holenear
	Dian Pelz		Charles Keinsel
	Chris Wagner		
	Rod Walker	- 3	Ron Bounds

- 4 Clint Bigglestone
Dennis Frisch
Margaret Semignani
James Goldman
Jack Harness
John Mazon
Dave McDaniel

- 5 Tom Pulmer
Jerald Jacks
Stuart Keshner
Stephen Patt
Richard Uhr

- 6 Sidney Get
Thomas Gorman
Don Recklies
John Sandoval
Joel Sattel
Bill Schreffler

- 8 Phil Castora

- 9 Barry Gold

-10 Dan Brannan
Paul Farley
Bernie Eling
Richard Schultz

-12 Fred Lerner

-14 Roland Tzudiker

The Country List

England	+23	60.1%
Turkey	+21	59.2%
France	+ 8	53.5%
Russia	- 1	49.6%
Italy	- 5	47.8%
Austria	-12	44.7%
Germany	-34	35.1%
- - - - -		

+16 Jerry Pournelle

+15 Don Miller
Charles Turner

+13 Larry Peery
Rod Walker

+11 Frank Clark
Monte Zelazny

+10 James Dygert
Werry Much
Charles Meinsel

+ 9 James MacKenzie

+ 8 James Latimer
Hal Paus
Bud Pendergrass
Earl Thompson

+ 6 John Austin
Thomas Griffin
Mark Owings
Harold Peck
Bruce Pelz

+ 5 Rick Brooks
Ken Davidson
Jack Greene
Chris Wagner

+ 4 Richard Bryant
Allan Huff
Bob Lake

Kenneth Levinson
Dian Pelz
Eugene Prosnitz
Richard Shagrin

+ 3 Don Harrows
John Beshara
Chuck Carey
William Linden
Jim Pattee

FROM Current Game Rating List #3

+24 John McCallum
Charles Wells

+20 John Moning

+18 Derek Nelson
John Smythe

+ 2 Ben Atkins
Lou Curtis
Michael Dobson
Clyde Johnson
Greg Long
Mike McIntyre
Laddox

+ 2 Hank Reinhardt
Jose Revillagigedo
Jock Root
Jim Sanders
Mehran Thomson
Bob Weston

+ 1 Hugh Anderson
Doug Baker
Douglas Beyerlein
Christina Brannan
Bill Christian
Thomas Eller
Wayne Gibbs
Bill Haggart
Michael Makulin
Jay Maldeman
George Neap
Sherry Neap
Mark Johnson
David Lebling
Paul Leith
McDonald
Robert Maloney
John Mazar
Mike Miller
Momada
Frank Rusbach
Cliff Ollila
SDDSCBW
Mike Santos
Bob Speed
Ben Turk

0 Edwin Baker
Don Berman
William Bogert
John Davey
Ben Hendin
Gail Schow

- 1 Dan Brannan
Dave Francis
Wayne Hoheisel
Jerry Huston

- 2 Bob Adams
Frenda Banks
Ron Daniels
Al Goggins
Gregory Molenaar
James Munroe
Al Scott
Conrad von Metzke

- 3 Ken Flethner
Anders Swenson

- 4 Michael Aita
Len Bailes
Clint Bigglestone
John Boardman
Art Canfil
Alexis Gilliland
Jack Harness
Dave McDaniel

- 5 Brian Bailey
Tom Bulmer
Scott Duncan
Stuart Meshner
Writz Mulhauser
Steven Patt
Bill Stewart
Jerry Tenney

- 6 William Celestre
Jack Chalker
Sidney Get
Stephen Gordon
Thomas Gordon
Jack Longbine
Jerry Page
Ron Parks
Rick Payment
Don Recklies
John Sandoval
Bill Schreffler
Stephen Willard

- 7 Edi Pirsan
Ron Bounds
Leonard Garland
Geo. Parks

- 8 Robert Ward

- 9 Robert Cline
Dennis Frisch
Barry Gold

-10 Paul Farley
Bernie Kling
Joel Sattel
Dick Scultz
Richard Uhr

-11 Jerald Jacks

- 12 Stephen Barr
Fred Lerner
- 14 James Goldman
- 17 Roland Tsudiker
- 18 Charles Alexander
- 19 Phil Castora
- 29 Margaret Gemignani

Banks Mebane's card was misplaced. He has a score of +7. And I am beginning to see the merit in Dave Lebling's suggestion that we have a computer do this sort of thing. Especially if it can be persuaded to do the printing.

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The Reinsel Rating System

The first Rating List proposed was brought forward by Charles Reinsel, back in the summer of '65. Several editions of it appeared in Graustark, one edition in Charles Wells' Lonely Mountain, and for more than a year and a half it has appeared regularly in Big Brother. For those not familiar with it it gives +7 points to the winner of a game, +2 points to any other survivor with 10 or more forces on the board at end of play, +1 point to all other survivors, and -1 point to each of those eliminated. As can be seen, it is a maze of arbitrary elements. In spite of this it has its merits; the ratio of 7 to 1 is, I think, fairly close to a player's subjective feeling of the importance of a win and a survival, respectively.

I thought it might be of interest to prepare a country list, using the Reinsel system, and using the same completed games as indicated for the MOB list, above. With the following result:

Turkey	+41
England	+20
Russia	+18
Italy	+17
Austria	+15
France	+10
Germany	- 6

With the exception of the first and the last, the countries are far more nearly equal in this listing than they are in the MOB one.

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